

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1871-
1914

57

national sentiment. Millerand, the Minister of War, accompanied him to the frontier, whence the Grand Duchess saluted the lost provinces, and the visit concluded with a review at Nancy- which became a demonstration against the Treaty of Frankfurt. Opinion forced the hand of Napoleon in 1870, and could again confront the Governments with a situation leaving no issue but war." The most chauvinist tirades in the theatres and the *café-chic* added the same witness in May, 1913, aroused frenzied applause. Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, reported his impression that of all the Powers represented in the Ambassadors' Conference during the Balkan conflict France was the one who would see war with the least regret. The election of Poincaré as President of the Republic in January, 1913, proclaimed and increased the new spirit of confidence. He remarked to the German Ambassador that the people were pacific, but would not tolerate a second Agadir. Delcasse was sent as Ambassador to St. Petersburg to hasten the military measures agreed by the General Staffs. The increase of the German army compelled France to restore the three years* service which had been discarded in 1905 ; and though the law was strenuously fought by the Socialists and the Caillaux Radicals, France, like Germany, was ready for sacrifices.

The atmosphere of Paris during the last years of peace is reflected in the thoughtful Memoirs of Schoen, who succeeded Radolin at the Rue de Lille in 1910. The phrase " friendly and neighbourly relations " was used for the first time on his presentation to President Fallières, and the new Ambassador did his utmost to realize the ideal he had expressed ; but, like other peacemakers, he found the path blocked by the impalpable barrier. " In spite of the lapse of

forty years, in spite of the country having
achieved renewed
prosperity, in spite of the acquisition of colonial
possessions,
in spite of having long since recovered the
position of a Great
Power, the wound of 1871 would not heal. The
majority of
the people were naturally less fiercely patriotic as
time went on,
but an active minority kept up the smouldering
fire with a
view to its bursting into flames at the given
moment. When I
suggested to M. Barthou, the Premier, that it
was a great pity
to exhaust ourselves on armaments and strife,
he replied,
*Render-nous l'Alsace-Lorraine, alors nous serons les
meilleurs amis*
de la terre" How could he say anything else? In
his lectures
on the origins of the war Poincaré declares that
France would